



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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taken several generations to find it out. But "reproduction" in music is on a different footing, and we would sometimes be glad if our great interpreters would be content to reproduce and not insist upon composing! The artist paints his picture, and it tells its own story to multitudes of the uninitiated. But the musical composer writes his work, and to all but the initiated his score is a dead thing. Then comes the artist-*interpreter*, and in his hands it comes to life, and multitudes of the uninitiated hear and enjoy. In this case reproduction is not only an achievement but a necessity, and the person who can thus reproduce is called an "artist," a title which we do not give to a copier of pictures.

(3) The question is asked — "Should not the musical training be such as to enable the performers (1) to play correctly and grammatically 'by ear' (is this exactly what the writer means?); (2) to read music without the aid of an instrument, *i.e.*, to realize it by looking at it; (3) to write down music that he hears; (4) to transpose?" and again, "These are regarded as the higher branches of musical education; *ought they not to be taught in some degree from a much earlier stage?*" Decidedly they ought; and they do form a regular part of the "Child Pianist" course, which is entirely an elementary course.

(4) Fräulein Diez, in her excellent article in the Jan. (1897) number, rightly described the ordinary instruction book, pointing out that after the first few easy tunes the recreative music contains "everything the pupil is *not* ready for." In the reading exercises and recreative music of the "Child Pianist," the pupil never finds anything for which he has not been prepared in a previous lesson.

(5) Teachers are "trained to *teach* in contradistinction to trained to *perform*" vocal music at the summer session of the Tonic Sol-fa College, London, and pianoforte in the "Child Pianist" training classes held by Miss Scott Gardner, also in London. Nowhere else, so far as I am aware.

All this is, of course, ancient history to the House of Education; but there are, doubtless, many in far-off places who may be helped by a full answer to this letter from Ceylon.

PHYSICAL TRAINING IN GIRLS' SCHOOLS.

As a parent of girls, and an extremely interested observer of the slow and gradual awakening in those who deal with the education of girls in this country to the need for reforms, two reforms strike me as urgent—the need for shorter hours of work, and the need for a properly organised physical education. How many girls' schools in the kingdom are there at this moment, where brain work (in which I include serious study of the arts, as music and drawing) occupies six hours per diem only, and six hours is surely a reasonable maximum. In how many girls' schools is any time *daily* devoted to physical education?

By physical education I do not mean *play*; nor would I suggest that any of the short time now devoted to physical recreation, should be curtailed. Though the physique is improved by games, they can never quite take the place of real physical education and training. I have visited many girls' schools in this country, both high schools and private schools, and at many of them have seen fine gymnasias attached to, or forming part of the school building. With such opportunities, I have enquired how much time daily, is given to physical training, and I have invariably found that one hour a week has been considered enough. If the young frame could be induced to grow only during one hour a week, this arrangement might work admirably. I believe in many schools some attempt is made to have a short drill for ten minutes daily, but I fear that in few cases is the drill taken by a teacher who has studied physical training scientifically.

Drill viewed as a training in precision and prompt obedience to command is always excellent, and can no doubt be taught by anyone possessing quickness of eye and decision of voice; but drill used as a special training in the development of the physique is on a higher plane altogether, and demands skilled teaching. Physical exercises carelessly taught and performed defeat the very object for which they are given, and leave the muscles in worse case than they found them. Every year,

students from such establishments as the Hampstead Physical Training College are drafted off thoroughly competent to teach Swedish drill, gymnastics, swimming, fencing, etc. What becomes of them? We hear of them in this town and that, giving a lesson for an hour once a week at the High School; but we do not hear enough of them; nor can I believe that they can find enough work to fill their time or their pockets. Perhaps some of your readers can enlighten me.

The problem seems to me to be this: the young have to work their brains at high pressure and to develop physically, mentally and morally at the same time. We expect and hope that this triple development shall be thorough; and we expect in fact more than nature can give.

The growth of children in their teens is often abnormal; all their physical force, or rather all the forces of their nature, seem to be expended in shooting upwards, and yet we must perforce keep them sitting six or eight hours a day developing their mental faculties, and at the same time we expect and demand from them an increased sense of moral responsibility and awakening to ideals of higher life. Do we not expect an impossibility?

The answer to all criticisms on school plans of work always is, "there is so much to do and so little time to do it, something must be neglected." There are only two ways of meeting this difficulty (a real one, which must be met, and not evaded by neglecting an important part of education). Either to do less in the time or to take more time in the doing.

There is nothing new in this first suggestion; for the principle that true education is not the acquirement of so much knowledge, but the development and strengthening of the mind, has been so often repeated as to have become a truism. Yet what signs have we in the curricula of the High Schools of the present day that this principle underlies their arrangement? It is the second solution offered above that I would specially bring before your readers in the hope that a discussion, fruitful of good, may result.

Why not keep our girls at school an extra two years, till they are nineteen or twenty, devoting several hours a week to real physical training? An extra two years added on to their school life would yield from one-and-a-half to two hours' extra time daily. Let 45 minutes of this time be given up to

physical training classes under skilled teachers, the rest to what I may term physical training pursuits, such as fencing, swimming, etc. Let them still keep the same amount of leisure time, as they now enjoy, to use as pleases them best, and let the rest of the day be given to steady and well economised brain work. Let there be no odd half-hours in the day which must be filled in with "padding" lessons, or *useless* preparation. The old-fashioned schoolmistress anchored her faith on the copying-in book which saved her from the responsibility of seeing that her girls were out of mischief, but was pure waste of time, to say nothing of the drudgery, and its tendency to encourage careless work at first hand. I should think, at the fashionable school to which I was sent as a girl (and that is not so long ago) we wasted two or three hours a week in copying in exercises and sums already worked out and corrected, to show up to parents and guardians as specimens of neat work. Are our girls' schools quite free from the reproach of time wasted in somewhat similar fashions even now?

Surely, if a plan on such reformed lines were carefully worked out, it would be found that our girls were better equipped to take their place in life than they are now, and that health, which is so large a factor in both character and happiness, would be theirs as a more general and a more lasting possession. Mental vigour has its foundations in physical vigour, and we cannot expect independent and forcible thought from brains which have been overpressed at that most critical time in the young life, a time when nature calls lustily (so often, alas, to deaf ears) for room and time.

The difficulties in the way of this reform are not insuperable, though it would be idle to deny that there are difficulties. Tradition is always an enemy to reform; but girls' schools have no overpowering traditions behind them to render reform slow, as is the case with boys. Girls' schools have practically no traditions at all, because up to the latter half of this century (I might even whisper, a good deal later) no organised attempt has been made to grapple with their education on scientific lines. Girls' schools are making their traditions for future generations now, and it rests with women, teachers, parents or guardians, whether these traditions shall be noble and inspiring or narrow and depressing. When a

girl learnt only the use of the globes and crochet work and a smattering of the arts and tongues, her education was considered finished at 17 or 18. Yet now, when our girls study languages, literature, mathematics and science (not to mention the arts) with that thoroughness which the High Schools were mainly instrumental in bringing about, we still expect them to be finished (delusive term) at 17 or 18! It is true that the studious girl sometimes goes up to College to specialise in some branch of knowledge. She would still be able to specialise in my educational "Utopia," but she would do it later. Again there is not the same need, from a bread-winning point of view, for girls to specialise early, as is often the case with men entering professions. Therefore, why not educate them thoroughly, morally, physically and mentally, until the age of 19 or 20 and then let them follow their bent? I believe they would lose none of those golden years, supposed by novel-writers to lie between the ages of 17 and 20. They might marry a little later; but their health and vigour would be such that they would really be as much younger at 25 than their parents were before them, as *we* are younger than the woman of a generation or two back.

I have a daughter of 14, who is growing faster than she can supply strength for, and she is growing crooked. I sent her some little time back to a High School (as a weekly boarder, there being no school in my town) where they had a magnificent gymnasium, with apparatus of all kinds. I asked whether she could use daily one or two of the apparatus specified by a doctor, but was told that the gymnasium was only used once a week for an hour. (I may mention it was used every day for prayers.) She is now at another well-known High School where there is no gymnasium at all, and where the superintended physical exercise of the school is contained in one hour's calisthenics per week. I could take her away from school, and let her spend a year doing nothing but growing straight. She would probably be all the better for it constitutionally; but she would suffer from such a sudden break in the discipline and routine of life at a time when steady but not excessive brain work is most necessary for the mind, and discipline for the character. If I took the child away and sent her as a day boarder to the nearest High School, she would bring home so much preparation that, with

the time spent in going to and fro, there would be little time left for fresh air and none for special physical training. Now I contend that it ought not to be necessary for me to remove the child from school, and make a break in the continuity of her education, for such a cause; and, if girls' education were conducted on the lines laid down above, such a course would not be necessary.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty of all is the disinclination of the British parent to put his hand in his pocket; and lengthened years of school mean lengthened bills; I believe, however, that there is an ever-growing proportion of parents who feel that their first and highest duty is to fit their children better for good citizenship than they themselves have been fitted; and I believe this proportion is large enough to make the experiment worth trying. Girls are not yet so hopelessly bound down to standards judged only by examination as boys are—but I fear they are gradually working towards it. Is not this a blot on the otherwise good work of the High Schools? We do not *yet* expect our girls to be educated by a series of successive "crams" for scholarships—but the examination curse is laying its cold iron grasp on them, and the inevitable outcome of the forward movement in women's education, of which we are so justly proud, threatens to be that very physical deterioration which its enemies have always prophesied for it.

While there is yet time, let us consider whether Plato was not after all near the truth in his ideal of female education as in so much else; and whether the ideal is not after all within the possibility of reasonable attainment.

AN INTERESTED OBSERVER.